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RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
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RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC

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TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [NU](#)
SUBJECT: NICARAGUA LIFTS BAN ON U.S. CATTLE, BEEF, AND BEEF BYPRODUCTS

Summary

1. (SBU) Minister of Agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR) Ariel Bucardo told the Ambassador during a March 4 meeting that he had lifted a ban on the importation U.S. beef and live cattle. MAGFOR enacted the ban in 2003 when an animal infected with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy was discovered in the United States. Bucardo made a pitch for additional government-to-government Food for Progress (FFP) funds to continue support for the establishment of a plant and animal safety system. Given Nicaragua's interest in this topic, the Ambassador pressed Bucardo on MAGFOR's failure to send officials to more than 40 USDA training opportunities over the last two years. Bucardo blamed the absences on administrative ineptitude; Vice Minister Benjamin Dixon promised to coordinate more closely with the Embassy. Bucardo concluded with a description of MAGFOR's agricultural development program "Hambre Zero," which relies on Citizen Power Councils to decide how to distribute benefits. End Summary.

Meeting Attendees

2. (SBU) Ambassador Callahan met with Minister of Agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR) Ariel Bucardo on March 4. Before Ortega named him Minister

Ban on U.S. Beef Lifted

3. (SBU) Bucardo told the Ambassador that Nicaragua had lifted a ban on the importation of live cattle, beef, and beef byproducts from the United States. MAGFOR had enacted the ban in 2003 after the discovery of an animal infected with Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE, or Mad Cow Disease) in the United States. Although U.S. authorities had implemented safeguards to minimize the risk of further BSE infection, and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) classified the United States as "controlled risk" for BSE, Nicaragua continued to prohibit imports of U.S. deboned beef from cattle older than 30 months, all bone-in-beef, and live cattle.

USDA Cooperative Programs

4. (SBU) Bucardo made a pitch for more government-to-government Food for Progress (FFP) funds. He and Vice Minister Benjamin Dixon explained t

Failure to Participate in USDA Training

5. (SBU) Following up on the topic of plant and animal safety, the Ambassador asked Bucardo why MAGFOR officials had missed more than 40 USDA

"Hambre Zero"

6. (SBU) Bucardo concluded with a description of MAGFOR's agricultural development program, "Hambre Zero" or Zero Hunger. Bucardo claimed that

7. (SBU) Throughout 2007 and 2008, President Ortega touted ALBA funding for "Hambre Zero." FSLN Controlled Citizen Power Councils (CPCs) have

CALLAHAN